

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An airbag device comprising:
an airbag for being inflated in a predetermined direction upon deployment; ~~and~~
a guide that cooperates with the airbag causing the airbag to deploy in the predetermined direction as the airbag is being inflated;
a cover for the guide;
a follower of the airbag that rides along the guide during airbag inflation; and
a frangible portion of the cover that is ruptured upon airbag deployment.
2. (Original) The airbag device of claim 1 wherein the airbag includes at least one panel and a follower associated with the panel and the guide for causing airbag deployment in the predetermined direction.
3. (Currently Amended) The airbag device of claim 2 wherein the guide comprises an elongated member for being attached to a vehicle portion along which the airbag is to deploy, and the follower comprises an annular member extending about the elongate member for riding therealong as the airbag is deployed.

4. (Currently Amended) The airbag device of claim 1 wherein the airbag includes a casing in which the airbag is folded prior to deployment and the casing has a cover for the container that is opened as the airbag is inflated, and a the cover for the guide is configured to protect the guide against fouling with foreign materials.

Claim 5 has been cancelled.

6. (Currently Amended) The airbag device of claim ~~5~~ 1 wherein ~~the guide cover includes a frangible portion that the follower ruptures~~ the guide cover frangible portion as the follower rides along the guide.

Claim 7 is cancelled.

8. (Original) The airbag device of claim 1 wherein the airbag has a generally U-shaped configuration including a base portion and opposite side portions with the guide causing the airbag side portions to deploy in the predetermined direction.

9. (Currently Amended) An externally developed airbag device for being deployed along pillars on either side of a vehicle windshield, the externally developed airbag device comprising:

an airbag that includes portions deployed along each pillar;
a casing in which the airbag is stowed prior to deployment;
elongated guide members that extend along respective vehicle pillars;

~~and~~

followers of the airbag portions that ride along the respective guide members as the airbag is inflated;

elongated covers separate from the airbag casing each configured to form a space in which the respective elongated guide members extend; and

a separable portion of each elongated cover that are opened upon deployment of the airbag portions.

10. (Original) The externally developed airbag device of claim 9 wherein the guide members comprise rods and the followers comprise annular straps.

Claim 11 has been cancelled.

12. (Currently Amended) The externally developed airbag device of claim ~~11~~ 9 wherein the separable portions of the covers each include a longitudinally extending tear line with the respective followers rupturing the guide cover tear lines as the followers ride along the associated guide members.

Claims 13 and 14 have been cancelled.

15. (Currently Amended) The externally developed airbag device of claim ~~11~~ 9 wherein the covers ~~are~~ each include a base section that is configured to be secured to the vehicle to span a joint line formed between the pillars and windshield, and a cover section cooperating with the base section to form the space for the guide members.

16. (Original) The externally developed airbag device of claim 9 including a removal ~~means~~ mechanism for substantially keeping the guide members free of foreign materials.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~The externally developed airbag device of claim 16~~

An externally developed airbag device for being deployed along pillars on either side of a vehicle windshield, the externally developed airbag device comprising:

an airbag that includes portions deployed along each pillar;

elongate guide members that extend along respective vehicle pillars;

followers of the airbag portions that ride along the respective guide members as the airbag is inflated; and

a removal mechanism for substantially keeping the guide members free of foreign materials,

wherein the removal ~~means~~ mechanism comprises either a wiping ~~means~~ mechanism or a heating ~~means~~ mechanism.

18. (New) The externally developed airbag device of claim 10 wherein the casing includes openings adjacent the rods with the straps extending through the openings prior to airbag deployment.

19. (New) The airbag device of claim 1 wherein the guide includes a guide rod, and the cover has a base section adapted for being engaged against a vehicle, a cover section including the frangible portion, and a through opening formed by the base section and the cover section in which the guide rod extends.